

## AMERICAN PHARMACISTS MONTH

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge American pharmacists during American Pharmacists Month. Pharmacists play an important role in our health care system. Their contributions to the care of our country's citizens, especially our seniors, are key to the health of Americans.

Pharmacists are medication experts within our Nation's health care workforce. Each day, their efforts assist in improving the use and effectiveness of medications. Pharmacists are improving health care in community pharmacies, hospitals and health systems, nursing homes, hospice, and in patient's own homes through home-infusion therapies, as well as the uniformed services, the government, and in research and academic settings.

Pharmacists work towards making sure that consumers safely administer their medications, and to provide them with crucial information pertaining to possible side effects or complications of taking multiple medications. Pharmacists assist in providing the most effective combinations of prescription drugs to those who take more than one prescription at a time. Pharmacists are a critical part of our health care system and should be recognized and commended this month for their important role.

During the course of the debate on the Medicare prescription drug bill, I introduced a medication therapy management, MTM assessment amendment, which I was pleased to see accepted in the Senate passed version of the Medicare bill. While the amendment was not included in the version sent to the President for his signature, I was pleased to see an MTM program component incorporated. Establishment of such a program would allow pharmacists, in conjunction with physicians, to assist beneficiaries who have various chronic conditions manage their medications. Pharmacists will be able to help ensure that patients use medications appropriately, enhance the patient understanding of such medications and help reduce the risk of adverse reactions to drugs. Such a program highlights the important role that pharmacists play in helping Medicare beneficiaries to reduce the costs of prescription drugs.

As prescription drug prices continue to climb, it is all too important that we continue to support efforts that will help to alleviate this burden. As noted, pharmacists are a critical component of our health care workforce and therefore need to be provided with the tools that help them to best serve the public, as well as to continue to combat the rising prices of prescription drugs. During American Pharmacists Month, I call on my fellow Senate colleagues to join in a bipartisan effort to support our pharmacists by acknowledging and commending their hard work and dedication towards improving the effectiveness and overall cost of health care.●

## TRIBUTE TO VALENTIN J. RIVA

• Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the life of Valentin J. Riva—a friend and transportation industry leader that was taken from us at far too young an age. Earlier this month, I was shocked and saddened to learn that Val Riva had passed away suddenly as a result of complications from heart surgery. Val was only 50 years old. I and many of my colleagues who work closely on transportation policy will remember Val as a truly visionary leader and trusted colleague. Moreover, Val was an extraordinarily dedicated father and husband.

Over the last two decades, Val has held leadership positions in several transportation organizations. Throughout, Val has been an articulate advocate for investment in our Nation's transportation infrastructure. Val served as vice president of government affairs for the National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association from 1988 until 1991 and as vice president and general counsel of the American Road and Transportation Builders Association from 1991 until 1997.

From August of 1997 until the time of his unfortunate death, Val Riva served as president and chief executive officer of the American Concrete Pavement Association. And in his most recent position, Val not only continued to be a powerful voice in the fight for infrastructure investment, but he also was a strong proponent of making sure that adequate resources were being dedicated to advancing pavement technology and transportation research. We have often heard Members speak on this floor about the deteriorating condition of our Nation's roads and bridges. Val Riva recognized that we not only need to replace and rehabilitate those crumbling roads and bridges but we also need to conduct the necessary research to create new technologies that will help prolong the lifespan of our infrastructure.

Val Riva was also respected by his peers in the transportation industry. Best of all, Val had the rare gift of being both thoughtful and funny. He was considered a trusted colleague and, more importantly, a loyal friend to those individuals that had the good fortune to work with him. I consider myself extraordinarily lucky to be one of those individuals.

And while Val was very dedicated to his work in the transportation industry, there was no job more important or rewarding to him than being a father to Clare, Michael and David. No one ever had a meeting with Val without hearing about his children and hearing a historical reference. I express my heartfelt condolences to his three children and to his wife, Marti. Val's passing is much more than just their loss. It is a loss to the entire national transportation enterprise and the great many of us that recognized his leadership in it. While we will miss Val's personable nature, his humor and his strength, I and many of my Senate col-

leagues know that his contributions will live on for a very long time to come.●

## PRAISING THE WORK OF CAROLE EDWARDS AND THE ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY

• Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Carole Edwards, RN, BSN, of Juneau, AK. Carole is the first recipient of the Oncology Nursing Society, ONS, Excellence in Oncology Nursing Health Policy and Advocacy Award. ONS established the award this year to acknowledge the efforts of the many oncology nurses who participate as state health policy liaisons and other members who are active in advocacy efforts.

Cancer is a complex, multifaceted and chronic disease, and people with cancer are best served by a multidisciplinary health care team specialized in oncology care, including nurses who are certified in that specialty. This year alone, 1.3 million Americans will hear the words, "You have cancer." In addition, 556,000 will lose their battle with this terrible disease. Every day, oncology nurses see the pain and suffering caused by cancer and understand the physical, emotional, and financial challenges that people with cancer face throughout their diagnosis and treatment. Oncology nurses play a central role in the provision of quality cancer care as they are principally involved in the administration and monitoring of chemotherapy and the associated side-effects patients may experience.

The Oncology Nursing Society is the largest organization of oncology health professionals in the world, with more than 31,000 registered nurses and other health care professionals nationwide. Since 1975, the ONS has been dedicated to excellence in patient care, teaching, research, administration and education in the field of oncology. To that end, ONS honors and maintains an historical and essential commitment to advocacy for the public good by providing nurses and healthcare professionals with access to the highest quality educational programs, cancer-care resources, research opportunities and networks for peer support.

On behalf of the people with cancer and their families in my home State of Alaska, I would like to acknowledge Carole Edwards and thank her and ONS for their ongoing commitment to improving and assuring access to quality cancer care for all cancer patients and their families. Through Carole's and ONS's leadership, our Nation is charting a course that will help us win the war on cancer. I urge my colleagues to support them in their important endeavors.●

## MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.